



MONTANA DNRC Conversation

Winter 2007



Blackfoot River



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The New Frontier, Enterprise GIS

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DNRC Employee Highlight

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Annual Reports Available Online

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Meet Evan Hammer, the new DNRC GIS Coordinator

DNRC recently hired Evan Hammer as the new Enterprise Geographic Information System (GIS) coordinator.



Hammer

Hammer, a North Carolina native has a strong background in GIS technology and use.

Hammer first took an interest in geography during his college years. "I became interested in geography after I took an internship in Bryce Canyon, Utah, where I studied the area's bat population," Hammer said.

It was during that internship that he was able to see how GIS could be used in a practical arena.

More recently, he worked for the North Carolina Population Center. There he worked on a project that examined obesity probability given fast food resources and recreation opportunities in correlation to people's physical residences.

As the Enterprise GIS coordinator, Hammer will be working with all the divisions of DNRC to ensure coop-

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Season's Greetings to you all! The snow is welcome. Let's just hope we get a lot more! I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your hard work and dedication over the past year. As managers of Montana's treasured resources, we have substantial responsibilities. I am constantly impressed with the professionalism and good judgement of our DNRC staff. You serve the public well while enhancing and protecting our natural resources. Thank you again for all you do. Take some time to enjoy your families, friends, and the great Montana outdoors!

Mary



eration and data sharing on GIS projects for creation of accurate data.

Throughout DNRC, there is a great deal of geographic information; enterprise GIS basically means creating one common system for creating, editing, and using the data throughout DNRC. This will enable every division in the agency to work with accurate data every time.

"Right now, I'm working on integrating this system, and taking care of the program paperwork," Hammer said. His work will enable GIS users

to spend less time dealing with software and licensing issues and focuses on the needs of their division. Once that task is completed, GIS functions in DNRC will move smoothly, with a more cooperative approach and improved sharing of data.

Hammer has an undergraduate and graduate degree in geography from the University of North Carolina. He takes pleasure in exploring the outdoors through hiking, biking and road trips.

DNRC Conversation is an employee newsletter published quarterly by the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. Please send news articles or ideas for articles to your division liaison or to any member of the Editorial Board.

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Rolling Rivers Trailers – a “Class Act”

The Rolling Rivers trailers have become award winners over the past year. Recently the DNRC sponsored trailer based in Helena, received the “Class Act” award sponsored by



Jill Lorang, Cascade County Conservation District, and David Martin, DNRC/CDB, with Best Educational Award from the 2006 Great Falls Home and Garden Show

Sylvan Learning and KTVH. The award recognizes excellence in education and community service. Rolling Rivers trailers also received the best educational display award at the Great Falls Home and Garden Show while promoting stewardship on small acreages.

Rolling Rivers trailers are a cooperative effort between the Montana Association of Conservation Districts, four conservation districts and the Conservation Districts Bureau of DNRC. Together they have made presentations to more than 10,000 people in the past four years. This dynamic model demonstrates not only problems related to rivers and streams,

but solutions as well. The audience includes both children and adults.

The trailers will begin their 5th field season this year and plan to keep on rolling.



Realtors discuss riparian issues such as setbacks at a workshop cosponsored by DNRC and the Deer Lodge, North Powell, and Granite CDs. Photos courtesy of Dave Martin

Eccentric tastes and a kilt: Rick Duncan

DNRC is known for having very interesting characters as employees. Rick Duncan is no exception. A six year employee with DNRC as the Regional Water System Coordinator, Rick has a varied background and interesting tastes and hobbies, as you'll learn.

Born in Conrad, Rick's dad worked his parents' old homestead and other properties east of Conrad eventually moving to the Cut Bank area where his family owned a farm/ranch operation on the Blackfeet Reservation. "We ran Hereford-Black Angus cross cattle, farmed about a thousand acres of dry land spring wheat, barley and oats, and raised registered Quarter Horses. One of my most vivid memories from childhood was helping my father round-up cattle on horseback when I was about three years old." Rick explained.

As the Regional Water System

Coordinator for DNRC, he is responsible on behalf of DNRC and the state for providing assistance, guidance and funding opportunities to the grassroots organizations that are behind the four main regional systems currently in the works, mainly in northeastern and central Montana.

Rick has had a varied background in local and state government. Rick explains, "I sort of stumbled into my first government job in late 1979, when I was back in Cut Bank and learned that Glacier County was looking for a County Sanitarian. I interviewed, and was offered the job shortly thereafter, at an astounding \$1,000 a month!"

Throughout the years, Rick worked a number of jobs, including Lewis and Clark County as a Sanitarian.

After three-plus years with the County, Rick accepted a position with the Water Quality Bureau of



Duncan

the old DHES reviewing subdivision applications and eventually supervising the program from 1990 through 1991. Other pursuits drew his interest and after he left that

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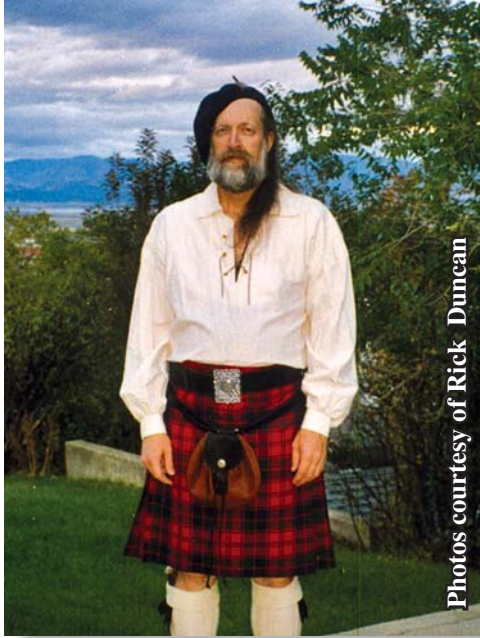
Duncan, continued from page 3

job, he began working mostly in the private sector, designing alternative on-site sewage treatment systems, preparing minor subdivision applications, doing some contract work for DHES and Lewis & Clark County, and working one day a week in a local bookstore.

"In April of 1996, I was at work in that bookstore when we were visited by the FBI – they were looking for some information on one of our occasional customers, a man I knew very little about. A week or so later, Ted Kaczynski was arrested outside of Lincoln, and that Friday saw a steady stream of print and electronic media reporters coming through the bookstore's front door. I had known the vicissitudes of fleeting notoriety a couple of times in my professional life, so was somewhat prepared for the onslaught, but it made for several memorable moments in the course of the next few days. I doubt that I will ever again be quoted in Newsweek, for any reason."

Some of the more interesting aspects of Rick are his hobbies and interests. Rick is a tenor drummer in a Helena area bagpipe band, the Shining Thistle Pipe Band, that plays at numerous events throughout the greater Helena area. "The Band started in about 1997, when two pipers and a drummer all got together and agreed on a name. I kilted up and marched in the St. Patrick's Day Parade with the band in 1999, and later that year began learning

the tenor drum as a member of the band. The fact that I didn't have to learn to play the pipes was quite an incentive!" he stated. Dressed in authentic wear, Rick is often spotted in between "gigs" at the DNRC Head-



Photos courtesy of Rick Duncan

quarters buildings, "Reactions vary, but the best response I have when asked the inevitable question (what is under your kilt) is that I wear what everyone else wears – shoes and socks!" He

says smiling.

The University of Montana graduate also regularly enjoys playing music with the local Irish Traditional Session musicians and dancing with the local adult Irish dance group.

And, it's not all fun and games; Rick has also been involved in numerous civic and volunteer organizations as well, ranging from CPR instructor to Amnesty International.

Some of his coworkers are aware that Rick has officiated at around 40 weddings throughout the past 20 years. Smiling, Rick states, "I'm happy to report that a number of those couples are still together!"

He confesses to be a man with eclectic tastes and prone to certain eccentricities that other people find either odd or charming. "At least once a year, I have a fondness for reciting 18th Century Scottish poetry, and washing down haggis with a glass of pungent Islay single malt.

I often find opportunity to laugh at myself, taking myself a lot less seriously than once was the case."

Rick has enjoyed his time at DNRC, but has some particularly rewarding events that have occurred. "October of 2000 and December of 2002 were memorable, for the fact that those were the dates when the two of the regional water projects were authorized by Congress. Also, I enjoyed being at Dry Prairie Rural Water's Culbertson ground-breaking in August of 2003 and Medicine Lake ribbon-cutting in September 2004. There's nothing quite like seeing all of the work by so many people come to fruition."

Rick is key in the development of four planned regional water projects that in total will cost approximately \$800 million to construct. This will mean that many Montanans will have a dependable supply of quality drinking water for the first time in living memory, and many others will be able to afford improvements to existing infrastructure which are or will be required by federal and state regulations. Being a part of these worthwhile endeavors is its own reward, he explains. "I am grateful for the opportunities to interact with the people who are dedicated to bringing these projects from the drawing board into physical realization."

So, if you're wandering around the Headquarters, stop in and say "hello" to Rick... it may just be the most interesting conversation you've had in some time!

For more information on the Shining Thistle Pipe Band, visit their website at www.shiningthistle.com.

Blackfoot River log clean up

When the dam on the Blackfoot River, upstream from the confluence with the Clark Fork River, was removed this past summer and the water level was lowered some ten feet an interesting discovery was made.

Logs, logs and more logs!

In logging's hey day, logs were dumped into the Blackfoot River and were floated down stream to the mill for processing. Well, as it turns out some of those logs didn't make it. Some of them sank to the bottom of the river.

The last log drive on the Blackfoot River was in 1926, but the mill continued to float logs in the holding pond behind the dam for years

after the log drives were discontinued.

The logs that were exposed are considered abandoned and were claimed by the State of Montana. The problem was that the logs that have been exposed were scattered along the gravel bars and shoreline could re-float down stream and cause major problems with the radial gate on the Milltown Dam.

This past summer, with funding from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) DNRC undertook the project to remove the logs most likely to cause problems with the Milltown Dam.

Kelly logging was hired to do the removal, using a combination of a rubber tired grapple skidder and an Exaliner line machine. Approximately 2,000 logs were removed over two weeks and decked in



Logs are yarded with an Exaliner out of the Blackfoot River to be decked on the bank.

the North Stimson mill yard. These logs will be offered for sale with the proceeds going to offset the cost of their removal.

Anyone want to adopt a log?



More logs are exposed as the river level drops, and await their turn to be yarded.



Logs exposed and deposited on a gravel bar after the old Bonner Dam was removed and the Blackfoot River was drawn down.

Long-time employees retiring in December

As winter settles into Montana, and many of us are thinking of taking our vacation, three long-standing DNRC employees are retiring

Ann Rau, who has worked for the Oil and Gas Conservation Division for 16 years; John Patrick, an employee in Centralized Services for

five years, and Scott Frickel of Trust Land Management for 19 years, all retired in December. We wish them well in their future endeavours.

Annual reports available online

'Tis the season for annual reports. You can find any of DNRC's annual reports online at www.dnrc.mt.gov/about_us/publications.asp.



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